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The Lansdowne Letter Bears Fruit.

The most specific statement of war aims yet made on the part of the Allies was delivered yesterday by Mr. LLOYD GEORGE in an address to the Entente conference at London.

The negative part of this programme, that is to say, the disclaimer of intentions commonly postulated to the people of the Central Powers by their politically interested rulers, is quite as important as the affirmative principles. LLOYD GEORGE denies without qualification that the Allies are fighting to destroy or to disrupt Germany, or even to alter or destroy the imperial constitution of Germany; or to destroy either Austria-Hungary or Turkey, or even to take from Turkey Constantinople or territory predominantly Turkish.

Then the British Premier goes on to state the principles for which the Allies are fighting; namely, the complete restoration of Belgium; reparation where possible; internationalization of the Dardanelles; reconsideration of the Alsace-Lorraine question; an independent Poland; separate national organization of the Asiatic provinces of Turkey not predominantly Turkish; Russia to make her own destiny; African colonies to be put on a basis preventing their exploitation by private greed or ambitious European Governments.

The moral and general requirements laid down by LLOYD GEORGE as conditions of peace are stated with equal clearness: The reestablishment of the sanctity of treaties; consent of the governed indispensable in territorial settlements; and provision of an international arrangement to limit armaments and diminish the chance of future war.

It will be observed how practicable becomes the way leading to peace when the conditions are thus conceived with clarity of purpose and stated frankly and plainly for the information of all the belligerents. It will be noted, further, how closely Mr. LLOYD GEORGE's programme coincides, in substance and spirit, if not entirely in form and detail, with President WILSON's conception of a settlement satisfactory to America's war aims.

The Teuton peoples now possess in authoritative form the assurance that the way is open, if they will take it, to a peace honorable to themselves and consonant with the integrity of their national existence and national institutions. The statement from London tells them squarely that the peace they long for is attainable without national destruction or intolerable humiliation.

Thus the Lansdowne letter has borne fruit. THE SUN, which has neither misinterpreted the purpose of that deliverance nor wavered in the belief that it would produce the desired result, a fair and sensible and candid disclosure of terms from each party in the great war as a basis for negotiation and ultimate settlement, welcomes the British Premier's statement of terms as a notable step toward the better understanding in Germany of that for which the Powers arrayed against the makers of this needless and horrible world strife are now fighting.

Exit the Junk Boatmen.

The harbor junk boatmen have lost their licenses, to the injury of a few honest men, perhaps, but in the interest of general peace and probity afloat. Most of the junk boatmen were rascals; the police insist that none of them could make a living by legitimate trade. This may be too severe. However, the junk boatmen have earned an evil name.

They peddled liquor to thirsty sailors and accepted in payment for it gear the fate of which owners never knew. They would accept from any member of a crew any article of ship's furniture that was transportable, and ask no embarrassing questions about the authority by which it was transferred to them. Some skippers found themselves unaccountably short of supplies and unexpectedly long of drowsy sailors when the junk boat had been alongside; and some skippers, sorrowful to relate, did a profitable trade with these easygoing floating merchants.

Harsh authorities on river front life—seamed and grizzled harbor policemen, gray pier watchmen and others given to drastic judgments—have declared that all the junk boatmen were pirates. It may not do to accept their verdict as final, yet they have studied the evidence with care. Strange things happen in the shadows of the wharves; battles are fought that never reach the official records, lootings occur that gain no wider publicity than the blotters of the police stations. There are tales of goods stolen from their rightful owners, stolen from the thieves and stolen again and again, until the record of their wanderings was lost in a maze of robberies not even a detective of fiction could untangle. And junk boatmen have their part in most of these transactions. They have sold back to the original owner more than once his property after it had passed through many hands.

Undoubtedly some of these gentry were spies, selling their knowledge to enemy agents. For that reason alone their suppression is to be welcomed, but were the world at peace and military and naval secrets not in demand, these pests of the harbor would merit the fate that has befallen them.

Broadway's Great Transit Day.

From the front page of this newspaper for June 28, 1885, we purpose to extract certain fragments of an article which bore the heading:

"THERE'S MILLIONS IN THEM.

"Jacob Sharp's Broadway Cars an Immense Success.

"No Blockades, and an Enormous Traffic Which Promises $1,500,000 Profits a Year—Full Cars From Noon to Dewy Eve."

"There's Millions in Them" referred to dollars and not to passengers. The story, an example of good reporting if ever we have printed one, began as follows:

"There was not much rumble on Broadway yesterday, and everybody missed the lumbering old stages which for fifty years and more had rolled up and down that thoroughfare, bumping into trucks, making pedestrians run for their lives, and nearly jolting the lives out of the passengers. In place of the rumbling there was a jingling of bells, and cream colored cars, drawn by perspiring horses, went smoothly by, making better time than the stages ever thought of doing, and carrying more passengers than they could conveniently hold. From early morning until 6 o'clock at night passengers kept piling into the cars. Lucky ones who got in at Bowling Green or at the stables at Fiftieth street and Seventh avenue managed to get seats, but many were glad to get a footing on the platform steps."

Here is interesting testimony that overcrowding in New York's vehicles is older than most people think. It existed before the subway which opened for travel yesterday under Broadway, from Rector street to Forty-second street.

On June 22, 1885, the first car of any kind to traverse Broadway left the depot at Fifty-first street and Seventh avenue at 5 A. M., and other cars followed at one and a half minute headway, which compares most favorably, considering that this was a generation ago, with the forty-eight seconds headway electrical operation, block signals and automatic stops make possible at present. On the opening day of the Broadway horse car line some old rolling stock had to be used. "The fine new cars, which will cost $1,500 apiece, and which are going to startle the natives, will not be finished for two or three weeks," explained THE SUN reporter. He went on to say:

"The first car carried down a good load, and the second a better. But as the morning advanced and more and more fares were rung up on the indicators, JACOB SHARP rubbed his hands in glee over his bonanza, and the horses began to perspire and wish that they were on their old line running up Church street and down West Broadway. Persons doing business in Broadway or living along its line were almost as tickled as Mr. SHARP. There was also great rejoicing in Broadway hotels below Fourteenth street."

As great or greater, no doubt, than yesterday's rejoicing in Broadway hotels above or below Forty-second street, but considerably above Fourteenth. The picture of Mr. SHARP is felicitous. It was his day of triumph, perhaps, on the whole, the most satisfying moment of his life. It was a climax at the end of the third act; the swift and shameful denouement of the fourth and last could have cast no shadows on SHARP's happiness at that hour.

We read that the people of Brooklyn were inconvenienced. Disembarking from the ferries at the foot of Fulton and Wall streets they found no stages to carry them to Broadway. Sweet will be the revenge of their children a year or two hence when it will be easier to get to Broadway from Brooklyn than from many points on Manhattan's East Side.

Every one had predicted terrific congestion if JAKE SHARP were allowed to run horse cars on Manhattan's oldest highway. "There were no blocks worth speaking of * * * of course there were occasional stoppages, but there were not 210 stages to dodge," nor 17,329 motor cars. No men in blue with wheels embroidered on their sleeves checked the flow of traffic by an uplifted hand. No tires exploded and no fuses blew out with the sound of a 75 millimeter gun. The bells on the horses jingled all day long and it took fifty minutes to ride from Bowling Green to Fifty-ninth street. It has been known to take as long more recently.

One car on three daytime trips yielded $32 in fares, and as it was calculated that at least $8 had been averaged on the 700 trips made by all the cars the first day, the new line was thought to have gathered in $5,600, "three-quarters of which at least is profit." If, as seemed probable, the business indicated amounted to $1,500,000 a year, the city would receive, besides $40,000 outright, 5 per cent. of the gross receipts, making $115,000 annually.

Although at the outset the Broadway cars did not run all night—the first car left uptown at 5 A. M., the last left Bowling Green at 2 A. M.—the business of other transportation units was noticeably affected. The Sixth, Seventh and Eighth avenue cars seemed to have fewer passengers. So did the Madison avenue cars.

"HENRY HART's little jigger line, which had a small monopoly in carrying passengers to the Battery from Vesey street, through New Church street, was not used as it was formerly. It used to charge three cents for its short trips, but it got proud a few months ago and raised the fare to five cents. Yesterday its drivers looked mournful, and its horses tranquil and happy. The Sixth avenue elevated suffered a little."

Instead of lacking standing room the elevated cars were only "comfortably full."

The absence of blockades on Broadway was attributed by H. A. NEWELL, superintendent of the new car line, to the effect the cars had in dividing the mass of vehicles, and it was thought worthy of remark that "the truck drivers took one side of the tracks or the other, according to which way they were going, and went their way in two steady streams." As for the displaced stages, fifty of them operated in Fifth avenue from Fourteenth street to Central Park. Also, having already borrowed $1,500,000 on a mortgage of his Broadway franchise, Mr. SHARP borrowed $1,000,000 more on a second mortgage. He didn't have to consult the Public Service Commission about it, either. Perhaps it would have been better if he had had to.

Well! All this seems a long time ago, a good deal more than the third of a century the calendars have measured off. Subway lines are opened every few months at present without causing a ripple of the public excitement those horses with bells brought to Broadway. We do not suppose that vivid interest will ever be rekindled, not even when the Interborough Air Transit Company operates its first dirigible omnibuses.

One of Red Tape's Worst Crimes.

We are constrained to believe, on the basis of the story in yesterday's SUN and one or two letters received by us, that there has been some measure of delay in Washington over transmission to dependents of allotments from soldiers' and sailors' pay. We are not speaking now of the family allowances which the Government, under the act of October 6, 1917, is obligated to provide, but of that half or less of soldiers' and sailors' wages which under the same law is payable to their fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, wives or children.

In some instances it would appear that this money was allotted as long as two months ago and has not yet been paid.

We have no idea to how great an extent this condition prevails. It may apply in dozens or hundreds or thousands of cases.

But whether it is the fact in ten thousand cases or in ten, we can think of nothing in the way of governmental delay more likely to occasion acute personal hardship to the old and the feeble, the young and the helpless at home.

We can think of no example of governmental sluggishness more certain to arouse widespread anger among the American people who may come into knowledge of a single case of such unwarrantable delay.

We presume, from a contemplation of the act of October 6, that the matter of these payments is in the hands of the Bureau of War Risk Insurance in the Treasury Department. But as allotments of pay are subject to regulations of the Secretaries of War and of the Navy, respectively, the hitch may be elsewhere.

Wherever it is it must be cut adrift! If Red Tape would leave women and children to suffer at home while the man fights abroad, Red Tape must be slashed into ribbons with the handiest sheath knife!

Make the Dye Industry Permanent.

In an address before the National Association of Cotton Goods Manufacturers, and published by *Price's Carpet and Rug News*, H. GARDNER McKERROW endeavored to impress upon Americans the necessity of making the dyestuff industry a permanent factor of our industrial life. He asked for a broad minded realization of the interests of the new industry, not merely a willingness to support it by using American made dyes during the time that others cannot be obtained and with a mental reservation to revert to the use of German dyes as soon as they are available.

He declares that we have already made marvellous progress in the industry. It is not to be expected that our dyestuff makers could produce in two years the range of shades that it took Germany thirty years to develop; but it can be fairly said that the American dyes "made from pure intermediates and following the chemical formulæ which foreign makers have made standard are just as brilliant and just as fast as foreign dyes."

The talk so rife at the time that the United States determined to emancipate the dye industry from German domination, to the effect that American dyes were not fast and therefore could not be guaranteed, Mr. McKERROW denounces as "an insidious propaganda" that was "carefully and industriously circulated throughout the country." There is no doubt that goods were at first placed on the market that were not fast. This was the natural result of the early efforts. Extraordinary blends and tag ends of German colors were used to get shades, the floors of mills and storerooms were scraped for colors, and natural dyestuffs were employed to secure shades with an entire ignorance of the proper use of the mordants and by improper methods of treatment. But as regards the question of guaranteeing a color Mr. McKERROW says:

"As a matter of fact there never was a pound of even German dyes sold in this country without the stipulation on the package that it was sold without guarantee, nor was there ever a shade offered on a color card showing German colors without the same reservation."

Two things are to be overcome to make the dye industry permanent: the prejudice of the housewife and the opposition of the manufacturer. The first is difficult because of the early German propaganda and the early failures of the dye makers. "To the everlasting credit of some of our large manufacturers" they are according the new industry cooperation and support. They are doing this by displaying a patriotic desire to save it from extinction by showing patience with delays and by condoning mistakes.

A result of the progress made is to prove that Germany's claim that the dyestuff industry is an insoluble secret is "pure bunk."

He Killed His Wayward Daughter.

Who shall pass judgment on the man who murdered his young daughter to save her from a fate worse than death she sought to inflict on herself? The man tried to punish himself with death, endeavoring to anticipate the extreme penalty society through the law might pronounce upon him. His purpose for himself may have been foiled by a nervous hand, but his child has been removed from the temptations of this world by his act.

A girl of 17, pretty, wilful, pleasure loving; the opportunities of a great and careless city for diversions that begin in innocence and end in sin and crime; a father worldly wise, who knows the inevitable outcome of the course his daughter has followed, and is determined to save her from herself, no matter what the cost. He seeks no mitigation of his responsibility; he is not content to denounce her, to order her from his door. After urgings, reproofs, rebukes failed, he sought and obtained for her employment in the hope that her interest in it might hold her from her dangerous pastimes. But she had her own will, the obstinate heedlessness of youth, and she went her way.

Discovering her final delinquency, the father reached the decision whereof the execution meant the end of all endeavor. He seems to have been completely undramatic, without pose. He called her from the family circle to another room. His wife, the mother of the girl, the other children, thought only that he intended to reason with her, to scold her. But his mind was fixed on another purpose, and without the sound of angry voices, without threats overheard in the small house, with the implacability of a legal executioner, he killed her and turned his weapon on himself. To his wife, rushing into the chamber of tragedy, he said:

"This will be better for you."

Better, too, he thought, for the child; better for him that he should die with her. Clearly, he had reasoned and fought this thing out. He looked for no compassion; pity, it may be, from those among whom he had held his head high in conscious rectitude and pride of family, had urged him on. In his act there is nothing of sudden passion. He slew his daughter with the calm determination of a sacrificial priest who, his priestly office done, passes from the scene.

"Mad" some will say, of this dread figure in a tragedy that is neither sordid nor commonplace. It is the simplest verdict.

Broadway is not only broad but a little deeper.

Turkey's offer to Russia of free passage through the Dardanelles seems to indicate that the Ottoman idea of peace is "This way out."

The late Captain BILL DENNIS of Greenport, Long Island, was unquestionably one of the greatest skippers of racing schooners the history of yachting records, but it lingers in a corner of the mind that he was equally great, though less widely famous, for a certain dish of his preparation. Are we mistaken in thinking it was clam chowder; and if we are not, will posterity enjoy Captain DENNIS's recipe?

The revolving fund will make everybody happy if it keeps the car wheels revolving.

New England is making 21,000,000 pairs of shoes, and if placed on the right feet they may cover the ground from the Hindenburg line to Berlin.

Skaneateles Perturbed.

From the Skaneateles Democrat.

Winter may be here all right, but Skaneateles residents got a jar the other day when they saw a young lady promenading up and down Genesee street in a white duck suit.

Great Drawing Cards.

From the Topeka Capital.

Next to the trial of a divorce case, a Coroner's inquest is attended by the greatest number of people who have no business there.

THE MODERATE DRINKER.

Must All Sacrifice Their Rights to Save the Drunkards?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Your editorial article of to-day, addressed "To the Moderate Drinker," expressed a feeling that has been growing in me for the past two or three years.

I have travelled through a number of prohibition States and have invariably found that the abolition of alcohol reduced crime. In Birmingham, Ala., for example, prohibition cut down the number of arrests made in the city by about two-thirds. Instead of being packed, as formerly, the jails stood half empty. The number of killings also showed a distinct decline. Such facts, as I have come upon them, have caused me to say to myself: "If I have to go without my cocktail or my glass or two of wine at a dinner party in order to prevent murder and lesser crimes, then, of course, I am ready to do so."

But, upon the other hand, there continually recurs to me the feeling that there is injustice in a regulation which prohibits even moderate drinking—especially the drinking of light wines and beer—merely because some persons cannot drink in moderation. There seems to me to be something illogical in the idea that the only way to prevent drunkenness and the crimes which are sometimes the concomitants of drunkenness is to eliminate all drinking. Alcohol is not the cause of all the evil in the world. Tobacco also does much harm. Then, since that is true, shall we not also legislate tobacco out of existence? Extravagant living likewise does harm. Shall we not also legislate against that? Shall we not force all citizens to save a certain portion of their earnings?

Hard drinking and the resultant crime must be stopped, but the question is, how far should a Government—particularly a democratic Government—attempt to deal arbitrarily with the shortcomings of human nature? Where should such a growing tendency on the part of the Government cease? And more important still, perhaps, if you regulate a man's conduct for him, do you not, at least theoretically, undermine his will and his initiative?

In a well conducted penitentiary—as for instance the Federal prison at Atlanta—a prisoner leads a peculiarly wholesome life. He has good food, no alcohol, and a proper quota of work and sleep. He lives in sanitary quarters and is obliged to keep his body clean. His life is regulated by the Government. But to what extent is it necessary that those of us who are not so fortunate as to live in penitentiaries shall have our lives legally regulated?

What would be the ideal situation? Would it not be a situation in which the individual who enjoys the æsthetic benefits of occasional moderate drinking should be permitted to continue in that enjoyment, while the individual who misuses alcohol cannot obtain it? And could not such a situation be brought about by the entire elimination of strong liquors, and by limiting the individual's supply of light wines and beer? Is it impracticable to give the moderate drinker a license, to secure which he shall pay the Government a tax? Cannot bars be closed altogether, confining drinking to the home? Can we not Hooverize on liquor as on food?

Must we, in short, go to the prohibitionist extreme in order to eliminate the evils accompanying hard drinking? If so, let us do it, but let us not be rushed into it pell mell without considering the question from all sides.

Let us, by all means, preserve the drunkard from himself, but let us, if possible, also preserve to the temperate individual his civilizing and comforting glass of wine. Must we give our entire consideration to the drunkard? Does not the man who can keep sober deserve some portion of our thought?

JULIAN STREET.

NEW YORK, January 5.

Not Too Much His Brother's Keeper.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Your editorial article addressed to the moderate drinker makes no appeal to me. I claim that the moderate drinker has rights. Among them are those of liberty and happiness.

He is not his "brother's keeper" beyond a certain point. Even if he were so regarded by unreasoning claims, it behooves him to stand fast and stick to his colors.

Because there are many weaklings in the world, do we give such moral backbone by giving up for their sake our peace and well being? I do not see it as you apparently do. That we show the example of temperance, morality, sobriety to all men is good, and no persons should cavil against what simply means character. If they did, we should mind them practically only so far as to make them mind the laws of decency and good behavior and not, by their doings, transgress the rules of progress and civilized man.

Bah! for the transcendent righteousness that is merely narrow mindedness and ultimately despotism in the highest degree.

Prohibition will cause, as I firmly believe, ills in many ways, far over and above any possible good resulting from it. The prohibitory laws will not be obeyed and deceit and fraud will become widespread and thus do great and irremediable harm. It has been proved to be so, in my own and many others' intelligent observation and experience. Already pharmacists are forbidden by law to dispense alcohol, even on a physician's prescription, unless it be combined or adulterated with such well known poisons as bichloride of mercury or carbolic acid.

Imagine the cases of great injury to health, or direct poisonous effects, resulting to many persons from such insane, not to say corrupt, legislation.

BEVERLEY ROBINSON, M. D.

NEW YORK, January 5.

TRADE BRIEFS.

Inverted electric lamps are needed in England.

A Portuguese firm wishes to buy office supplies, typewriters and accessories and carbon paper. Samples are requested.

Commercial Attaché William F. Montavon, Lima, Peru, suggests that catalogues and price lists of women's cloaks and suits be sent to his office, as the demand for these supplies is large at the present time.

Bulgaria's crops in 1917 were generally good. Fruit, hay, wheat and rice showed excellent results. Corn suffered from the hot weather. The tobacco crop was smaller than usual, but the quality was improved.

THE CITY HALL RUIN.

It Might Be Camouflaged for the Benefit of a Weary Public.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* What is the use of writing all that stuff about the City Hall cupola and clock? It does not force, as it were, a regeneration of the cupola.

For decency sake, why not camouflage the whole cupola? The way to do it is this: Let the Mayor order the Department of Public Works to remove the burnt wood, clean off the smoke and paint the dark spots, put in temporary window work, and beg, borrow or steal a large clock and place it in position.

We can all then wait until red tape has finally done the work. This would remove the eyesore and not let on to the stranger within our gates that New York officials are inefficient. Disguise the whole thing by using water, paint and new wood.

ONE WHO WATCHES THE CLOCK.

NEW YORK, January 5.

Will the City Hall Clock Face Be Veiled?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* If the recent drawing of the new clock location in the tower of City Hall is correct, below space formerly occupied by the timepiece, it will take a giant to see the time from the Park Row side of City Hall plaza.

Let the tallest SUN reader try it.

ALWAYS LATE.

NEW YORK, January 5.

SHIFTS FOR FIREMEN.

Does One Set of Our Protectors Get Most of the Hard Work?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The firemen in the downtown section of the city have just completed the most strenuous week in the history of the Fire Department. Numerous fires and severe weather have exhausted the firemen. In the section below Fourteenth street the men have been working day and night at two alarm, three alarm and four alarm fires, and the limit has been reached in human endurance.

This condition should result in the introduction of a new system of transferring firemen, so that the same men will not have to do all the hardest work all the year round. In the section below Fourteenth street there is more work for the firemen than in any other section of the city, and while they are working firemen in other sections, particularly those uptown, are taking things easy. The system isn't equitable.

F. D.

NEW YORK, January 5.

The Navy League's Comfort Work.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Owing to the unusually bitter weather we are now experiencing, the daily requests for our garments are increasing and our incoming stock must be increased if we are to meet the demand. We are not only requested to meet the needs of our own men but those of our allies.

During the past month we have delivered direct to the men themselves and various vessels, the latter through the courtesy of the New York Navy Auxiliary of the Red Cross, 15,937 finished garments, making our total at the close of the year 110,533 garments actually delivered through these headquarters, 509 Fifth avenue, and now being used by some man in actual service.

The serious problem of supplying wool to those who are willing to knit but are unable to purchase the wool still confronts us and we must appeal to the public's generosity to help us to carry on our work by contributions, no matter how small.

LOUISA PIERPONT SATTERLEE.

NEW YORK, January 5.

Shall the Price Fixers Invade the Candy Shop?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The candy makers seem to be getting about all the sugar they can use, while families are deprived of the small amount needed in their daily affairs.

Why not even up matters by placing a maximum price of fifty cents a pound on candy sold by the retailer, and by so doing stop the use of sugar for making candy which cannot be sold at that price?

It is not fair to use sugar in making candy to retail at one dollar a pound if at the same time the amount required by families is difficult to procure.

H. F. GILLETTE.

PORT WASHINGTON, January 5.

The Huns at Padua.

In days still vivid and golden I recall
How twilight shadows fell on dome and wall
In Padua. How San Andrea's chimes
Floated above the rooftops, and how all
Was peace and beauty. Through the o'erhanging limes
Girdling the Prato fleeting laughter stirred
From wandering lovers and from bough and bird.
Brighter the lights in vast Il Santo's aisles
Shone in the deepening gloaming, and the crowd,
Passing from worship through the long arcades,
Chattered as children chatter, gay with smiles,
Drawn by clear strains that echoed low or loud
From the bedecked Piazza of Cavour,
For here when droop the violet evening shades
Music ascends with all its lovely lure.

How magical it seemed!—how magic yet
The tall towered city in its gardens set,
Wrapt round about with olden memories
Thick as the vines that clothe its mulberry trees;
The house where Dante dwelt through hours of gloom,
Whose narrow windows look upon the tomb
Of Antenor; the grassed Arena space;
The Loggia's inimitable grace,
The wondrous statue Donatello wrought,
And the adoring mediæval thought
Perpetuate upon canvas—virgin, saint,
Such as the hand of Titian loved to paint,
Such as Bellini and Mantegna limned,
By the erasing centuries undimmed.

Long, long aforetime underneath the yoke
Of one whose name is linked with cruelty,
In woe and terror lived the Paduan folk,
And Ezzelino, called "the Devil," he!
Search history's page and you will find than his
No darker, bloodier atrocities;
Shuddering along the streets the people trod,
Calling in vain upon the aid of God;
In vain?—but nay! One heard them as they cried,
The Fiend was driven forth. By Brenta's side,
Bound to a stake, he gnawed his wounds and died.

In Paduan ways do they not think once more
His spirit comes from the abyss of night,
Clad in the Hun's habiliments of fright,
Bearing a newer horror, and, as of yore,
From this satanic thing do they not pray
For swift release, for retribution? Yea!
And we would cry with them—"God speed the day!"

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

"JANE EYRE" NOT MORAL ENOUGH FOR MOVING PICTURES.

Dusting Off a Classic, the Scenario Writer Discovers That Mr. Rochester's Villany Must Be Toned Down.

Some correspondents of THE SUN lately have been attacking the movie from several standpoints, but all have agreed on one count, that the plots of the pictures to-day are banal, crude and in many cases piffling and ridiculous.

As a possible remedy one writer suggests that the producers select their material from the works of "standard" authors, giving us a little Shakespeare, Dickens and others of their calibre.

That is precisely the matter with the motion picture theatre of to-day: there is entirely too much choosing of material from among the works of "big" authors of the past and present, too much screening of sensational fiction and stage "successes," the rush for "titles" keeping original photoplays from reaching the screen.

The average "standard" book or play, with the exception of so few that they are scarcely worth considering, contains, when it is stripped of dialogue, word painting and style hypnotism, a pretty crude and unconvincing plot. If your correspondents don't believe this let one of them go to the Public Library, look over the shelves till he comes to the book which he remembers as having given him the biggest thrill in his life (as an exciting or mystifying story, full of plot and counterplot and incident) and make a careful synopsis of the story. He will gasp, I venture to say, as he digests it: "What junk! And I thought that was a great plot! Why, it's the veriest piffle!"

I had such an experience lately; I've had many in the three or four years in which I have been preparing picture plays for the screen, but this is particularly illustrative.

One of the biggest producing firms asked me to make an adaptation for a woman star of a novel which, I think, has for forty or fifty years been more talked of than any other ever written. It made its author famous; it has always been considered a "standard." I had read it years ago and remembered it fairly clearly. The heroine was a persecuted, lovable thing; the hero a suffering, noble gentleman. To be sure, with a wife living he tried to marry the heroine bigamously, but the circumstances, as I recalled them, justified his action and the heroine nobly forgave him. A little later the wife was providentially removed and hero and heroine entered into the connubial bliss which they deserved.

In rereading the book I actually had to gasp at the story. The hero was a criminally inclined cad, whose unlawful act could not be justified by any of the author's specious arguments, which covered page after page; the heroine was a fool and so talkative that I had no sympathy for her; the "mystery" of the book was so simple and foolish; in fact, the story was wrong from beginning to end when I stripped it and examined it for screen purposes.

But the producers and the star wanted to do it, so I did it into a "scenario." I changed the story. Not that I thought myself a better author than the one who wrote it, but because I knew that to try to convince an audience that a man was justified legally and morally in marrying a girl when he knew his wife was alive would be hopeless. And to try to make them believe that the girl was a reasoning human being when she couldn't solve a "mystery" that was poked in her face all the time would not do either.

The movie does not argue nor preach, nor can it deceive with false clues or dress up with fancy verbiage. It presents its plots as a series of connected pictures that tell a story and try to be interesting. To the printed book or play, in which every device can be used to groom a plot that is knockkneed and bald, it is merciless. A plot is like a woman: you can dress a woman up, paint her face and pad her where she needs padding, and she will get by. That is what an author can do to a plot in a book or on the stage, but the movie strips that plot of its clothing and cosmetics.

Yet, fully aware from experience that there are mighty few plots available to the screen to be found in the "big" books and plays, producers go ahead getting their material from these sources. Why? Because the exhibitors throughout the country have an idea that the public wants titles.

"Give us titles, names of books and plays that are known, so that we can advertise them!" they cry. And the producers do as they are bid.

It costs money for play brokers, and literary agents, executors and publishers know the demand and charge accordingly. It would astound the public to know some of the prices paid for books and plays almost before they are read—I refer now to current stories and stage successes—simply to get titles.

This, of course, excludes the original motion picture play. I do not maintain that many of the right sort for the screen are being written. There has been too little encouragement for authors capable of writing real cinema plays to give it their serious attention. Even at that I maintain that the average original story produced is a good deal better than the average "title" picture, simply because it has been written for the screen and at least tries to tell its story by the cinema method, broadly, in tableaux rather than by argument, character drawing and word style.

I am enough of an optimist to think that the change will soon come. The producers will realize that they have pretty nearly exhausted the supply of available books and plays in a short while. Then they will begin to look for original picture plays.

When they do this they will begin to give the public something worth while, and the movie will take its place as a method of expression with the printed book and the spoken stage, to both of which it bears an analogy.

PAUL WEST.

NEW YORK, January 5.

LINCOLN'S TALL SOLDIER.

The Group of Five Great Men More Than Thirty-one Feet Tall.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* So much has been said of late in connection with the Barnard statue concerning the personal appearance and characteristics of Abraham Lincoln that the following article, published in the Reading, Pa., *Eagle* on December 27, announcing the death of Mahlon Shaaber, "Lincoln's Tall Soldier Boy," may be of some interest. It is as follows.

HENRY W. SHOEMAKER.

ALTOONA, Pa., January 5.

LINCOLN'S TALL SOLDIER BOY.

During his experience as a soldier Mr. Shaaber attracted much attention owing to his youth and unusual height. He met President Lincoln, who was a tall man himself, in Washington. The President wanted the young soldier to dine with him, but he proved too bashful to remain. Lincoln gave him a special pass which was afterward lost, and in saying goodby embraced him in parting and said: "If you visit Washington in the future call again."

Mr. Shaaber was very fond of describing this incident. This was at the outbreak of the civil war.

"We were passing in review along Pennsylvania avenue," said Mr. Shaaber on one occasion, "and among the thousands who lined the pavement I saw a small group of men standing apart. All were tall, but I noticed especially one man, very tall and gaunt, wearing a frock coat which clung somewhat indifferently to him. He had a thoughtful and serious look, his face was pale and his shoulders stooped.

"As I passed this group the tall man called out, 'Hello, Bub,' and beckoned. I did not know he was calling me until my captain told me to obey him. I did not realize who the man was. I went over to him and he grasped my hand. 'Excuse me,' he said, 'but it was jealousy that made me call you out of ranks. I wanted to size you up. How tall are you and what is your age?'

"I told him I was 6 feet 6½ inches in height and 17 years old. He then drew from his pocket a black covered memorandum book and a stub of a pencil and wrote in it my name, my regiment and the measurements. Then he introduced himself in his characteristic, simple way. 'I am "Old Abe,"' he said. I was startled at first and then my back stiffened with pride as I realized I was talking with the President of the United States.

"He then introduced me in his kindly, gentlemanly way to the other men in the group and put their names and heights down in his little book. A glance at that record will show with what famous men a humble soldier boy had that day been on terms of intimacy. This is the way Mr. Lincoln wrote it:

"Mahlon Shaaber, Co. B, 93 P. V.	6'6½"
"Abe Lincoln, President	6'4"
"Hannibal Hamlin, Vice-Pres.,	6'
"Gen'l Cameron, Sec'y of War,	6'½"
"Gov. A. G. Curtin, Penna.,	6'2½"
"Total,	31'1½"

The "8" in 1918.

From the Washington Star.

When I merely venture to skate
I keep cutting a large figure eight,
And I don't mind at all
If I get a hard fall,
For it helps me remember the date.

Dolorous Up-State Greeting.

From the Oswego Chief.

We tender you our good will and best wishes. Our purse isn't worth having.

THE POET TO BACCHUS.

The Peer of Poet-Painters Pays His Respects to Wine.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* M. Strinus in his letter of yesterday used his excellent pen in behalf of a worthy cause. Prohibition as to certain beverages, utterly harmless if taken in moderation, is more or less dictatorial on the part of those instituting the mandate. The present war might be instrumental in its countrywide taboo, but no other justification of prohibition can be tenable.

Why, Job enjoyed the elixir got from the fat grape. Saints of old did not disdain the jug brimful of the life-giving juice, then why should men of this late date demand its utter abolition? Yes, to those who abuse it, but not to those who relish it and revere its qualities.

Think how Keats enjoyed the offering of Bacchus, "icy, cold." He celebrated it in one of his poems. Goethe lived to an old age after having paid poetic homage to it for seventy years. History teems with men of glory who have adored it.

As to its inspiring quality, promoting wit and laughter, Mr. Strinus has well indicated how wine will bring out a person's hilarious mood. Begging pardon that I grow personal, I shall cite one of my sonnets to several wines, each affecting me in a different way:

SEYSSEL WINE (FRANCE).

Where beautiful the Rhone vale flows and winds,
Old Seyssel lies, with poplars sentineled
Around the rocky mountains, [illegible] spelled,
Ascend; with vineyards grown, where each one finds
Their grapes most luscious, but when they are turned
Into fair wine, with hue as tender [illegible]
Of vines, then gulp thou some, quite [illegible] and hale
The mood will grow that long for [illegible] yearned.

A laughter will upspring, thoughts [illegible] surprise
Like jugglers with iridescent balls at play—
So thou wilt pitch and catch the thought [illegible] alway,
And pleasure will make sunlight in [illegible] eyes.
For Seyssel hath such spell [illegible]
And make thy lips leap and [illegible] to flow.
(1891.)

Of course other wines have an opposite effect, as, for instance, [illegible] hauser:

Thou soporific wine, whose [illegible]
The active brain with lethargy [illegible]
* * *
Till in thy spell we sleep [illegible]

However, ignoring the poetic [illegible] lies inherent in the nectar, [illegible] virtues are invaluable. Many a [illegible] in my travels a bottle of [illegible] in restoring my tired body, and [illegible] in need of company a pint [illegible] my loneliness.

Hence, let us thank the gods that they made the grape red and white, and [illegible] our forefathers, who, from its [illegible] juice, found a way to create a beverage worthy of homage; since through the ages its qualities to mind and body have sustained the sickly, have given life and wit to the average mortal and to the great in intellect inspiration, [illegible] a flux of invigoration when [illegible] despair.

LOUIS M. EILSHEMIUS,
Peer of Poet-Painters.

NEW YORK, January 4.